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Inventory
for
Manuscript Collection
MS-431

Capt. William S. Higgins Papers
Inclusive dates: 1862-1917
Bulk dates: 1874-1884

by
Anastasia S. Weigle
Edited by Nathan R. Lipfert

April 2009

Shelf feet: 1.5
Number of boxes: 3
Accession # 2006.087.01

A PART OF THE CAPTAIN W.J. LEWIS PARKER BEQUEST

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ABSTRACT

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Higgins, William S. [Storey], *Captain*, (1842-1922)

Papers, 1862-1917 (Bulk 1874-1884)

3 boxes (1.5 shelf feet)

Shipmaster of Bath, ME, later of Bangor, ME.

Papers of Capt. William S. Higgins (1842-1922), master of the Bath bark **Edwin Reed** and part owner and commander of the ship **George Stetson**. Collection includes correspondence and various vessel papers when he was captain of the **Edwin Reed** and during the building of the ship **George Stetson**. Also included are receipts from the schooner **Henry B. Metcalf** dated 1891-1892 and one invoice from the scow schooner **Major Dearing** dated 1862. Personal papers include letters and notes regarding Higgins genealogy.

Bequeathed by Capt. W. J. Lewis Parker in 2006.

MS-431. Accession # 2006.087.01.

Finding aid in repository; folder level control.

Added entries—persons:

Higgins, William S., *Captain*

Added entries—corporate bodies (including vessels)

Morse & Co.
George Stetson (ship)
Edwin Reed (bark)
Henry B. Metcalf (schooner)
Major Dearing (schooner)

Added entries—key terms:

Higgins family
Lumber trade
Lumber-yards
Ship Captains
Shipping
Ships—Owners
Bangor (ME)
Bath (ME)

ACQUISITION

This collection was bequeathed to Maine Maritime Museum from the estate of Capt. W. J. Lewis Parker in November and December 2006.

PROVENANCE

There is no documentation in Capt. Parker's papers that would indicate how or where he acquired this collection.

RESTRICTIONS

There are no restrictions on the study or use of these materials.

PHYSICAL CONDITION

Condition of letters in adhesive tab bindings, other than the typical surface dirt and minor tears, were in good condition. Detached letters from their adhesive bindings left a dry adhesive stain. The leather spine from a Book of Letters has detached from the front cover board.

Invoices from the schooner **Henry B. Metcalf** were the most deteriorated with surface dirt, mold and water damage.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Capt. William S. [Storey] Higgins is the son of Elisha Higgins and Sarah Donnell Storey Higgins, born in Bath, Maine December 12, 1842. He was master of his own ship at the very young age of 21 and for over 30 years sailed in the offshore trade commanding many fine Bath-built barks and ships, visiting many of the principal ports of the world and doubling Cape Horn many times. He was master of bark **Edwin Reed** and co-owner of the **George Stetson** — last ship he commanded.

He married Carrie Louise Morse, daughter of Llewellyn Morse of Morse & Co. of Bangor on November 19, 1874. They had one daughter, Louise M. Higgins-Tarbox and one son, Walter S. Higgins.

He retired from sea to take up a residence in Bangor, Maine and entered the employ of Morse & Co. of which his father-in-law, Llewellyn Morse was president. Capt Higgins served 27 years as superintendent of the lumber and house finish plant and had been a stockholder since the incorporation of that company. He left the firm in 1922 due to poor health and died November 17, 1922.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTES

The Capt. William S. Higgins papers consist of one book of letters (letter copy book), two letter and invoice file binders, correspondence, and vessel papers such as invoices, bills, charter parties, freight and cargo receipts for the ship **George Stetson**, bark **Edwin Reed** and two-masted schooner **Henry B. Metcalf**. Capt Higgins was master of both the **George Stetson** and the **Edwin Reed**. As for the two-masted schooner **Henry B. Metcalf**, the owners during 1891-92 were Morse & Co., whom Capt Higgins became a partner of after his retirement.

The book of letters is correspondence from Capt Higgins to L. J. Morse, George Stetson and Capt. P. M. Whitmore regarding the new ship **George Stetson**. The **George Stetson** was built in Bath and owned by P. M. Whitmore. George Stetson was acting agent. . Capt. Higgins was also part-owner and made two voyages on the **George Stetson** before retiring. The last two letters are written to Capt Samuel Veazi, dated Feb.1884. One of the letter and invoice file binders also pertained to the ship **George Stetson**.

The second letter and invoice file binder dated between 1874 and 1878 pertains to the bark **Edwin Reed** when Capt. Higgins was master.

The remaining papers in this collection are personal correspondence pertaining to family genealogy, newspaper clippings and miscellaneous papers such as blank receipts and notices.

PROCESSING NOTES

Letters were bound in two separate "adhesive letter and invoice file" binders and one copy book of letters. The letters that were in the "adhesive" binders were attached to tabs at the binding side. Most of the adhesive had migrated away and letters were detached leaving some staining. A few were still adhered. There were some invoices and documents interspersed through out.

Since the adhesive in the binders would continue to deteriorate through time, I chose to remove all the letters and re-file them in acid-free folders in chronological order as they were in the binder. The two empty binders were then housed in Box 3 of this collection. Papers from these binders had the typical surface dirt and minor tears, but other in good condition.

Invoices from the schooner **Henry B. Metcalf** were the most deteriorated with surface dirt, mold and water damage. Dirt was brush off while mold was gently wiped away. All were gently flattened with a tacking iron. These invoices were then all placed in polyester sleeves.

I placed personal correspondence in its own series as family genealogy. That left miscellaneous papers—news clippings, blank receipts and notices.

ORGANIZATION OF SERIES

MS-431 CAPTAIN WILLIAM S. HIGGINS PAPERS

SERIES I. FAMILY GENEALOGY, 1911-17
Personal correspondences

SERIES II. VESSEL PAPERS, 1862-1892
IIA. Edwin Reed (Bark)
IIB. George Stetson (Ship)
IIC. Henry B. Metalf (2M schooner)
IIC. Major Dearing (2M scow schooner)

SERIES III. MISCELLANEOUS, n.d., ca. 1860-1883
Newspaper clippings
Blank receipts and notices

FINDING AIDS

MS-431 CAPTAIN WILLIAM S. HIGGINS PAPERS

SERIES I. GENEALOGY PAPERS

BOX	FOLDER	
1	1	Personal Correspondences, 1911-1917

SERIES II. VESSEL PAPERS

IIA. Edwin Reed (Bark)

	2	Correspondence, 1874
	3	1875
	4	1876
	5	1877
	6	1878
	7	1879
	8	Bill, invoices, receipts — 1875-78
	9	Charter parties — 1874-79
	10	Freight & Cargoes — 1874-79
	11	Complaint Report, n.d.

IIB. George Stetson (Ship)

	12	Outgoing correspondence, letter copy book – 1880-1884
	13	Incoming correspondence - 1880
	14	1881
2	1	1882
	2	1883
	3	1884
	4	Accounts summaries – 1881
	5	Bills, invoices, receipts — 1880, 1882-84
	6	Charter parties — 1881-82
	7	Freight & cargoes — 1881
	8	Protest , damages — 1884

IIC. Henry B. Metcalf (2M schooner)

	9	Bills, invoices, receipts — 1891-92
	10	Freights & cargoes — 1891-92

IID. Major Dearing (2M scow schooner)

	11	Receipt, 1862

SERIES III. MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS

BOX	FOLDER	
2	12	Newspaper clippings, n.d.
	13	Blank receipts and notices, ca. 1860-1883
3		Two empty invoice and letter adhesive binders